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DYN DYNAMICS: AN ETHNOHISTORY OF A COMMUNITY BASED PUBLICATION

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The Anthropology of Work and its related subdiscipline Industrial Anthropology and the latter's modern successors Business Anthropology and Organizational Anthropology have spent the last seventy or so years studying the organizational background of western methods of work . As a result the history of *Dyn: The Journal of the Durham University Anthropological Society* and the organisations producing it offers a chance to apply some of their findings to an anthropological journal. This paper accordingly considers the evolution of *Dyn* and its related organisations in the light of the table entitled *Life Cycle of Community Based Organizations* in a recent *Practicing Anthropology* §.

Stage	Key Feature	Characteristics
Start-Up	Response to community crisis or enduring problem, activist orientation.	Face-to-face family-like relationships, roles not clearlydefined, internal communication informal, policies and structures are limited, goals are narrow and targeted, single source funding, charismatic leader.
Adolescence	Achievement of recognition as part of the local community.	Accomplishments to highlight, informal structures instituted, movement from volunteer to paid staff, seeking of a wider funding base, initial organizational challenges in terms of funding, staffing, or leadership.
Maturity	Firmly established as an organized institution	Professionialization of staff, formal organizational structure and policies, more formal communication and record keeping systems, clearly defined roles and hierarchy, seeking to develop a funding reserve, diverse income streams.
Stagnation	Enhance (sic) level of problems and uncertainty or conflict	Unresponsive to changes in local community, lack of vision, heavy bureaucracy limits initiative, falling staff morale, mounting debt.
Shut down or rejuvenation	Loss of funding leading to closure or recruitment of new leadership and establishment of new direction	Organization demise or reactivation with renewed mission, energy, and funding, enhanced staff morale.

The use of the model to analyse the ethnohistory of *Dyn* requires a holistic analysis that considers several groups and organisations that are embedded within one another. The discussion of *Dyn's* history accordingly involves the undergraduate society, the anthropology faculty, the whole department, the university (including rival departments) and British and international academia (including the restraints placed thereupon by governmental and or funding agencies).

Stage 1 Start-Up

In so far as the journal was initially founded by a newly founded undergraduate society, stage 1 cannot be seen as a "response to [an]enduring problem".Though as the society was founded by students in a department that had recently broken away from the department of geography, the students of the newly founded department had a fairly activist orientation. If newness and lack of tradition are seen as a problem then the start-up could arguably be seen as a response to a "community crisis". The choice of name *Dyn* reflected the Welsh domination of the anthropology society at the time - it means "man" in Welsh.

In addition, from what I have been told by some of the staff, and students involved there experienced "face-to-face family-like relationships" complete with family quarrel amongst the faculty. Roles were, however, in contrast to the model, relatively clearly defined both in the department and the student society. As a result the president of the society one Douglas Davies* became the first editor of the journal. Despite the structuring of roles "internal communication was relatively informal." In so far as much initial energy was devoted to producing a new group identity and culture that was different from that in geography "policies and structures [were] limited, goals are narrow and targeted." The fact that the early volumes were printed by the geography department highlight the paradoxical nature of the affair.

The university via the department and student union offered the "source [of] funding". In so far as there was charismatic leadership it rested in the student society which may explain why it was the founder of an anthropology journal and not the faculty. The papers for the first and much of the second volume were based on presentations given to the anthropology society by visiting lecturers. This partially reflects their desire to aid a fledgling department and society, but also reflects the state of British academia at the time in that there was far less need than nowadays to publish and that publications did not necessarily have to be in referred journals. While the first volume was entirely made up of papers by visiting speakers, subsequent ones included the works of authors with greater connections with anthropology at Durham. Vol 2 thus included four papers by students (or ex-) students of the department.

The Adolescence Stage.

By vol 3 (1975) *Dyn* had achieved recognition as part of the local community and was found to be useful in the exchange of journals between institutions. This was the first volume in which departmental staff contributed papers. One of these subsequently explained to me that this article enabled students to have to hand an explanation of a part of his course that they had previously found difficult. Such a function is nowadays served by posting similar data from staff on course intranets via duo (Durham University Online). The earlier practice was, however, more economically advantageous to the society as students were expected to purchase copies. This might just fit under the heading of " seeking of a wider funding base"!

The major "organizational challenges in terms of staffing, [and] leadership" related to the different temporal cycles of the student body and the journal. The fact that student society committees change every year while the journal was only produced every other year meant that volume 3 was commenced by one editor and finished by another. This led to the post becoming more or less detached from the student society and the journal, in practice (but not officially), being edited by the head of the department and produced by a post-doctoral student and the secretarial staff of the department together with the printing unit of the geography department. Thus while not officially the case, there had been a " movement from volunteer to paid staff" and the recently (semi-)released students commenced their own annual journal entitled *Anthrophobia; A Departmental Dossier* with subtitles that ran through- *A Lighthearted Competitor to MAN & DYN;* (vol. 1 c. 1976); - *A Lighthearted competitor to DYN, MAN and AMERICAN ANTHRO - APOLOGY* (vol 2 c. 1977) and *A Lighthearted Competitor to Dyn, Homme: Elle, Lui; Nous & Nature (incorporating Cosmohominid & Neanderthal News)* (vol 3 c. 1978).

Some of the social anthropological staff in tandem with *Dyn* and *Anthrophobia* commenced a series incorporating longer papers entitled *Working Papers in Social Anthropology* with vol 1 in 1975, 2 in 1976 , 3 in 1979 and 4 in 1980.

Stage 3 Maturity

By vol. 4 (1977) all contributors to *Dyn* had at least one Durham degree and it was "firmly established as an organized institution" all-be-it as a lowly ranking journal with a "professionialization of staff, formal organizational structure and policies, more formal communication and record keeping systems, clearly defined roles and hierarchy". The economics did not involve "seeking to develop a funding reserve, diverse income streams" though there were in the 1970's and 80's annual coffee mornings combined with bring and buy sales that partially funded the society and visiting lectures and were thus indirectly a source of papers for *Dyn*. These annual Saturday events had the role of binding some of the faculty's families closer together.

Dyn accordingly continued through the 1980s with a volume approximately every two years. In practice papers were collected from semi-willing visiting lectures, staff and occasional students and ex-students and when a sufficient number awaited publication a new volume was produced. As a result the actual publication date was sometimes up to a year after the date cited on the cover.

Stage 4 Stagnation

It is hard to say when the routinisation of production led to stagnation but certainly by the 1990's there was an "enhance[d] level of problems and uncertainty" due to the changing nature of British academia, with its pressures for prestigious publications and its myriad of new anthropological journals which were refereed. As a result papers offered to *Dyn* tended to be first drafts and/or conference papers that were unlikely to be published elsewhere. This coincided with a period in which the anthropological society became less active.

As a result *Dyn* appeared "unresponsive to changes in local community" and unable to respond to an outside bureaucracy which "limit[ed] initiative".

Stage 5a Shut Down or Organization demise

In contrast to the model the temporary demise of *Dyn* was only partially due to a ‘’loss of funding” as funds were only cut off by the department when members of staff could see little point in expending energy and time on a journal with a small readership and relatively little reward. As a result volume 11 of 1995 was the last issue of *Dyn*. In contrast the department flourished and became briefly the largest department of anthropology in Europe. The Anthropological society also briefly died.

Stage 5b Rejuvenation

The expansion of the department and its expanding research interests and increasing numbers of research workers and the availability of new technologies have now made it possible to revive the departmental journal in a new media and with a new name. The current situation is well described in the table with “Organization reactivation leading to [the] recruitmentof [a] new leadership and with renewed mission, energy, and funding, enhanced staff morale [and the] establishment of [a]new direction”. The increasing numbers of students also coincided with attempts to revive the student anthropological society. However, in its new revived form *Dyn* is not even pretending to be a product of such a society.

The Model

The model was intended for use with voluntary organisations rather than an academic journal. Despite that it well describes the fate of a institution attached to an educational organisation that could not be described as voluntary, despite the fact that many activities within it are voluntary.

END NOTES

† A history and overview of the subdisciplines can be found in Maritta L. Baba,1986 *Business and Industrial Anthropology: An Overview* napa bulletin no.2. Other perspectives can be found in the *Anthropology of Work Review* . Of particular note are the special issues "Twenty Years of Work Anthropology: A Critical Evaluation" (vol 18 no.4), "Remembering Herb Applebaum" (2001, vol. 22 no. 4; and 2002 vol. 23 nos 1-2).

§ Page 46 of Merrill Singer “An Organizational Life Cycle Perspective on the Development of the Hispanic Health Council” *Practicing Anthropology* , vol. 25, no. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 46-51.

* Douglas Davies is currently a Professor of Theology at Durham University and I would like to thank him for sharing his memories of the Anthropology Department. It should, however, be emphasised that the analysis is and any errors herein are the author’s alone.